

Square 226 & Reservations 32 & 33
(Pershing Sq. & National Sq.;
Pershing Sq. & Shepherd & Pulaski Parks)
Pennsylvania Ave. Between 13th & 15th Sts.
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-474

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

SO. 226 & RESERVATIONS 32 & 33
(Pershing Sq. & Natl Sq.; Pershing Sq. & Shepherd & Pulaski Pks)

Location: The area is bound by 15th, 13th and E Streets, N.W., and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Present Owner: The United States Government

Significance: The intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue, E, 13th, and 14th Streets, N.W., containing Reservations 32 and 33, forms the westernmost of two major open squares along the Avenue between the Capitol and the White House. Square 226, once occupied by buildings, stands as a landscaped park, and together with the open square, serves as the formal entry to the Presidential Park. Being located in such close proximity to the White House, Square 226, Reservations 32 and 33 were primary candidates for changes brought about by the Senate Parks Commission and the Public Buildings Commission; studies for the development of the Federal Triangle. These properties have been subject to much planning over the past 15 years and are presently undergoing major construction to aid in the current plan of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation to rejuvenate the urban quality of Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and the White House.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Before the turn of the Twentieth Century, Reservations 32 and 33 existed as part of the paved open square bounded by Squares 226, 255, 291, and 254.

The earliest improvement of any kind was one just prior to 1887 on Reservation 33, when pedestrian paths were formed and a horse fountain was installed on the 13th Street side of the triangle. Square 255, (present location of the District of Columbia Building) was the location of the Georgetown and Washington Cable Rail Road Power House, and blocks south and east of Square 226 were filled with commercial buildings, most of which were built in the early-to-mid Nineteenth Century (see Map #1).

The year 1900 marked 100 years since the establishment of Washington as the national capital and the keynote of the celebration was the visual improvement of the city. This was encouraged in part by the simultaneous "City Beautiful" movement arising from the Chicago World's Fair. Senator McMillan (Chairman of the Senate Committee of the District of Columbia) secured authority to appoint a committee, known as the Senate Parks Commission, whose two goals were to physically accommodate the rapidly expanding government bureaucracy in Washington and to enhance the L'Enfant Plan. Members of the Commission included the main participants in the design of the Columbian World Exposition in Chicago: Architects Charles McKim and Daniel Burnham, Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens.

A major decision of this commission and the government and its agencies, was to centralize the large number of government offices rather than continuing to locate government offices in various privately owned buildings throughout Washington.

In 1910, Congress approved a plan for the location of the Justice, Commerce and Labor, and the State Departments on property bounded by 14th and 15th Streets, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Constitution Avenue. This land was aquired soon after, and preliminary plans were prepared. Construction, however, was deferred indefinitely.

In 1916, a second commission, named the Public Buildings Commission, was created by Congress to further investigate the need for additional governmental space. It was recommended that all land in the triangle formed by Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue be aquired by the government. This land was subsequently purchased, but it was not until 1925 that President Coolidge requested appropriations for these public buildings. Congress then passed a public building bill of \$50 million for government buildings in the new Federal Triangle. The administration of the program was given to Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, to be assisted by a Board of Architectural Consultants (members were: Edward H. Bennett, Chairman, William A. Delano,

Lewis Aynes, Arthur Brown, Jr., Milton B. Medary, and Louis A. Simon; James A. Witmore was the supervising architect). The Board revealed their plans for the triangle of government buildings in 1927, and in 1930, Secretary of the Treasury Mellon was authorized to contract for the demolition of any necessary property in the Federal Triangle. The westernmost portion of the Triangle was to be completed first and demolition of Squares 226-233 took place immediately.

Square 226 was to be the location of a public park and was cleared for visual reasons according to the Public Buildings Commission. It was stated in their 1930 "Report" (Vol 2):

"The clearing of this irregular square is necessary in order to furnish an unobstructed view of the north elevation of the new Department of Commerce Building. After buildings are cleared away, the space will be parked and form a part of the architectural scheme of the triangle area. The state of Pennsylvania is planning to locate... a beautiful fountain at an approximate cost of \$1 million"

The fountain was never erected, and Square 226 remained level until 1932.

Early development of Square 226 included considerable commercial use, owing to its prime location on the Avenue between the Capitol and the White House.

The southwest portion of the Square was the location of Albaugh's Grand Opera House, the home of the Washington Light Infantry and a local stage for productions of the fine arts.

Fronting Pennsylvania Avenue were many commercial businesses, the Randall House, (later known as the Oxford Hotel) and the Grand Army of the Republic Hall. (see Map #1)

Early plans for the new Federal Triangle incorporated Square 226 in plans for the Justice Building, resulting in Pennsylvania Avenue being the northernmost boundary of the Triangle rather than the short span of E Street that now exists. (see Map #2)

These preliminary plans also incorporated Reservation 32 into the lawn of the newly constructed District of Columbia Municipal Building. The statue of Alexander Robey Shepherd which adorned the entrance to the District Building, was moved to the northwest corner of the extended lawn. This configuration lasted only a few years and construction of the Federal Triangle resulted in the reopening of E Street as an open thoroughfare. (See Map #3)

Activities of the McMillan Plan and the Public Buildings Commission also brought further development of Reservation 33. The reservation had been landscaped since 1887 with pedestrian paths and some seating, but on February 27, 1903, \$50,000 was appropriated for a statue of General Count Casimir Pulaski and erection of a pedestal for location on the triangle. On February 25, 1910, an additional \$5,000 was appropriated for the unveiling of the statue, preparing the site, and improving the grounds. Dedication took place on May 11, 1910.

Throughout the construction of the Federal Triangle, Pulaski Park remained unchanged until 1959 when National Park Service Landscape Architect Albert Rutledge presented new plans for the triangle. Rutledge's plan was approved in February, 1960, and executed in the spring of 1960. (See Map #3)

PART II. SITE DESCRIPTIONS

A. Square 226

Square 226 is a trapezoidal park formed by 15th, 14th and E Streets, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Razing of the square in 1930 left the property vacant for many years, until the beautification program of Mrs. Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960's. At this time flowering plants (changed seasonally), shrubs and various ground coverings were planted and trees lined the periphery of the park. Small winding paths cut through the park and were the location of scattered outdoor furniture.

B. Shepherd Park

Shepherd Park (Reservation 32) was landscaped by the District of Columbia Government following construction on the Federal Triangle. This small park was adorned with small shrubs and trees, but was designed more as a traffic island than a pedestrian space as in Pulaski Park.

The eight foot statue of Alexander Robey Shepherd was designed by Sculptor Ulric Stonewall Jackson Dunbar of Ontario, Canada. Dunbar also designed the Ross Memorial at the District of Columbia Municipal Building, and more than 150 portrait busts located across the country and in Canada.

Shepherd was the first D.C. native to be honored by a public statue, and he appropriately holds a map of the city in his right hand. Serving as director of the Board of Public Works and as governor, Shepherd was responsible for the paving of hundreds of miles of Washington streets. He also established the first city water and sewage system, planted thousands of trees, and graded most streets for the first time. Shepherd left Washington in 1879, when the Senate refused to confirm his nomination as commissioner of the new commission replacing the District's semi-independent government.

C. Pulaski Triangle

Pulaski Triangle (Reservation 33) was designed by National Park Service Landscape Architect Albert Rutledge in 1959. Relandscaping involved the planting of azalias, Japanese holly, English yew, magnolias, and ground coverings of evergreen winter creeper and carpet bugle. On the 13th Street side of the park were locust and maple trees; other peripheries were lined with shrubs.

Brigadier General Count Casimir Pulaski's equestrian statue was designed by Polish Sculptor Kasimiriez Chodzinski and completed in 1910 in Chicago. The base of the statue was designed by Architect Albert R. Ross of New York in 1908.

General Pulaski was a Revolutionary War patriot who preferred the uniform of a Polish marshall to the uniform of the Continental Army. After fighting to defend the freedom of Poland from Russian, Austrian and Prussian invaders, Pulaski was recommended to General Washington by Benjamin Franklin while in Paris. Pulaski was shot from his horse in the battle of Savannah in 1779 after several victorious assaults against the British.

PART III. PLANS FOR THE VICINITY

A. Square 226

Under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, Square 226 will become Pershing Park, dedicated twenty years ago as a memorial to General Pershing, but never realized. Design of the park is a collaborative effort by the firms of Jerome Lindsey, Associates, Washington, D.C., and M. Paul Friedberg and Partners of New York.

The Pershing Memorial is designed by Architect Wallace K. Harrison of New York.

The park itself will contain a shallow, 100' x 75' pool which will function as an ice skating rink in the winter months. Six fountains will feed the pool that will be surrounded by terraced steps and white birch trees. A glass enclosed kiosk at the pool terrace level will provide an eating establishment. Ample seating surrounds the southern edge of the pool.

The Pershing Memorial will be located at the eastern edge of the park and is comprised of a ten foot granite wall inscribed with maps pertaining to General John K. "Blackjack" Pershing's military career in leading American expeditionary forces against the Germans in World War II.

B. Reservations 32 and 33

Pulaski Park and Shepherd Triangle are both to be incorporated in the Venturi and Rauch/George Patton, Inc. design for the new Western Plaza. The decision for forming a rectangle in the area of Pennsylvania Avenue is derived directly from Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plans for Washington and Andrew Ellicott's revision of L'Enfant's plan. Each showed a rectangular open space proposed as a plaza in this exact location.

The 2.2 acre park will be 600' x 160' and hold three major elements: at the west end are a pool and landscaped area, and a central parterre depicting the L'Enfant plan for Washington. (see Map #4)

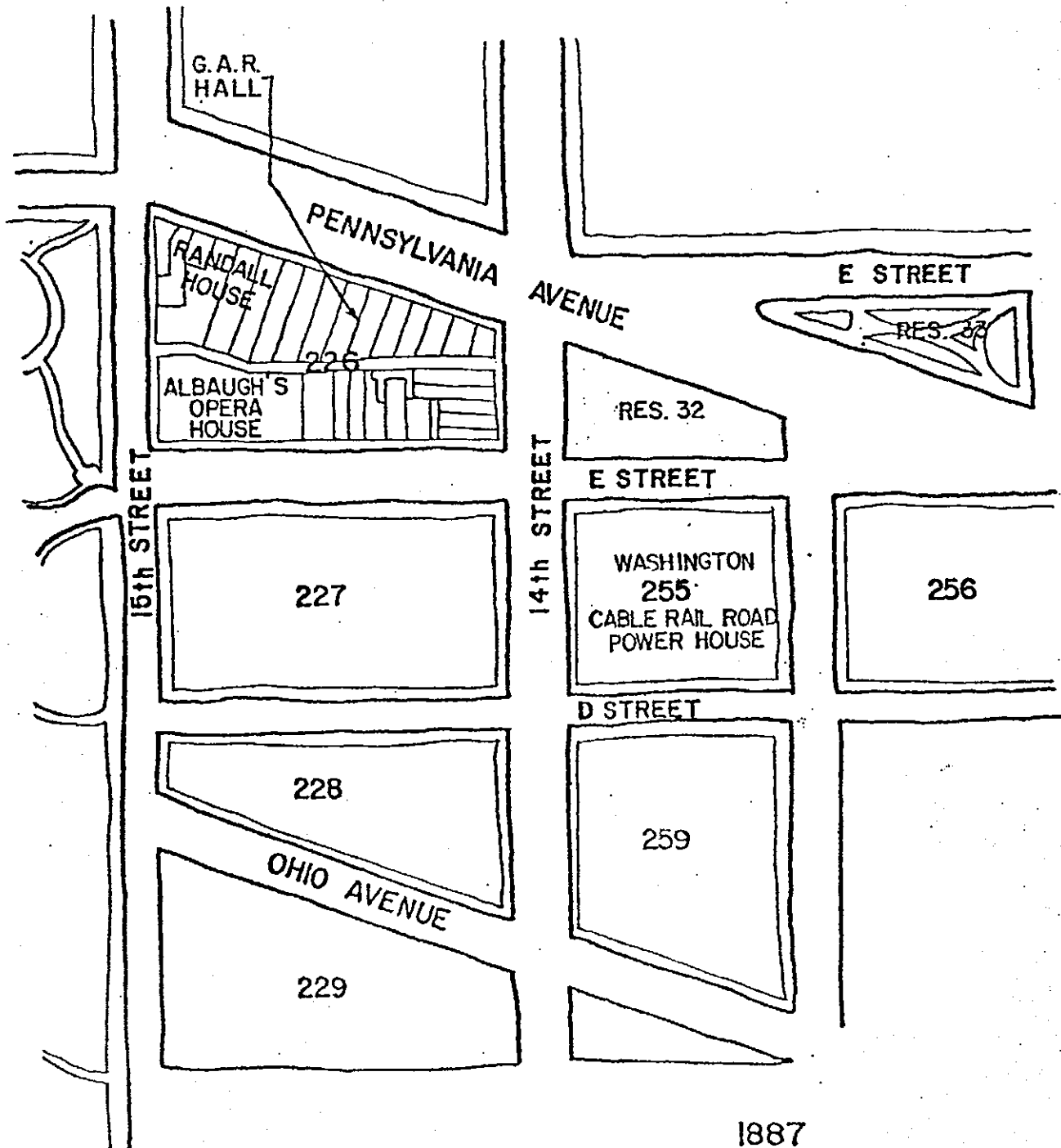
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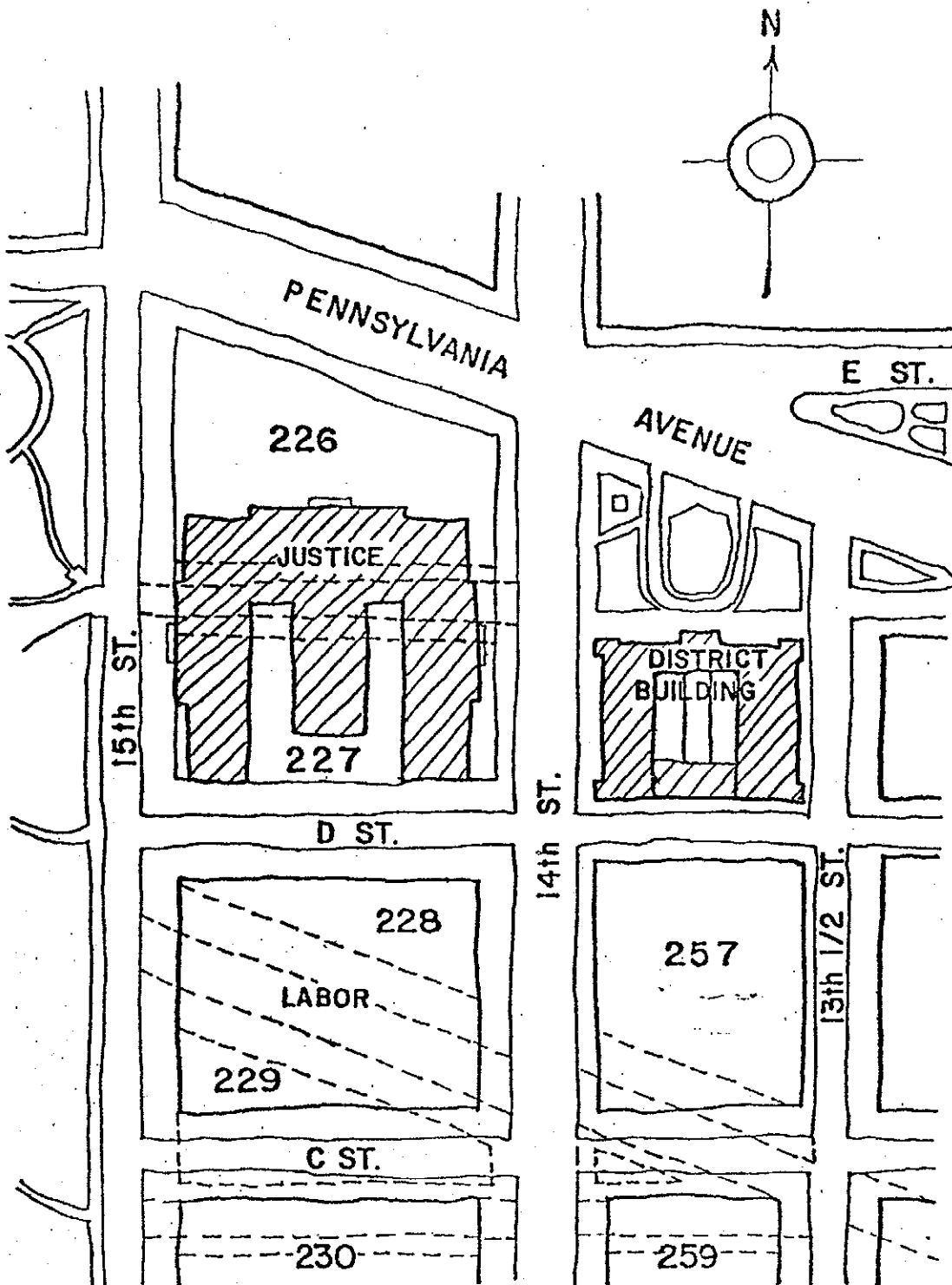
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation in compliance with Executive Order 11593, and Stipulation 6 of the PADC Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council.

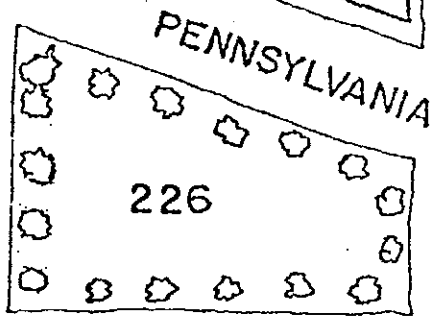
The recording of the project was completed under the general supervision of Jeffrey S. Wolf, Architect with PADC. Historic data was compiled and edited by Wendy Hunter, also with PAOC.



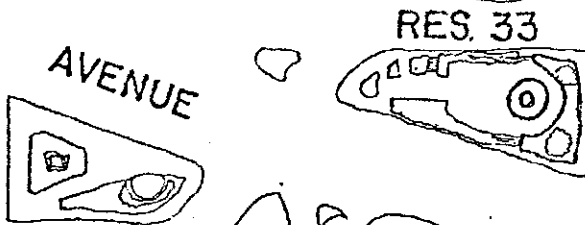
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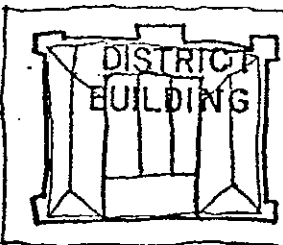
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SQUARE 226. RESERVATION 32 IS INCORPOR-
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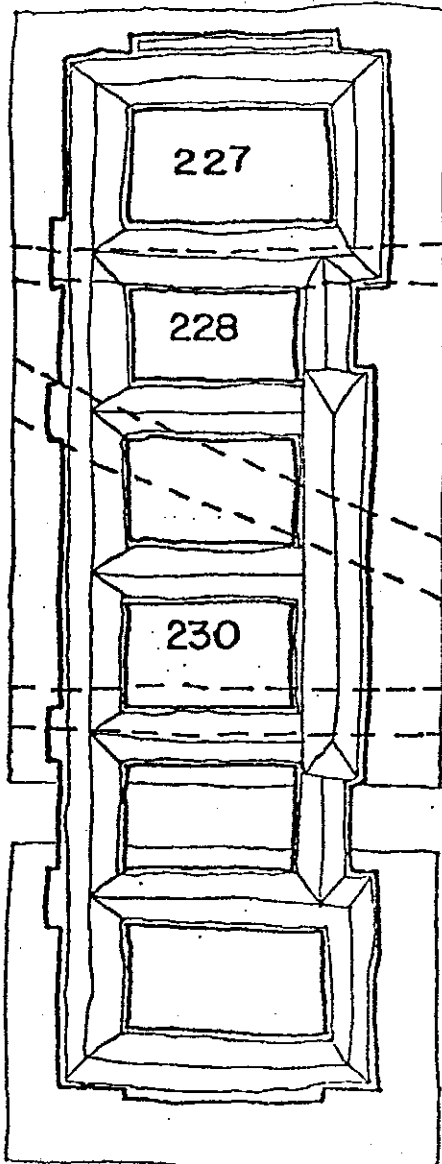
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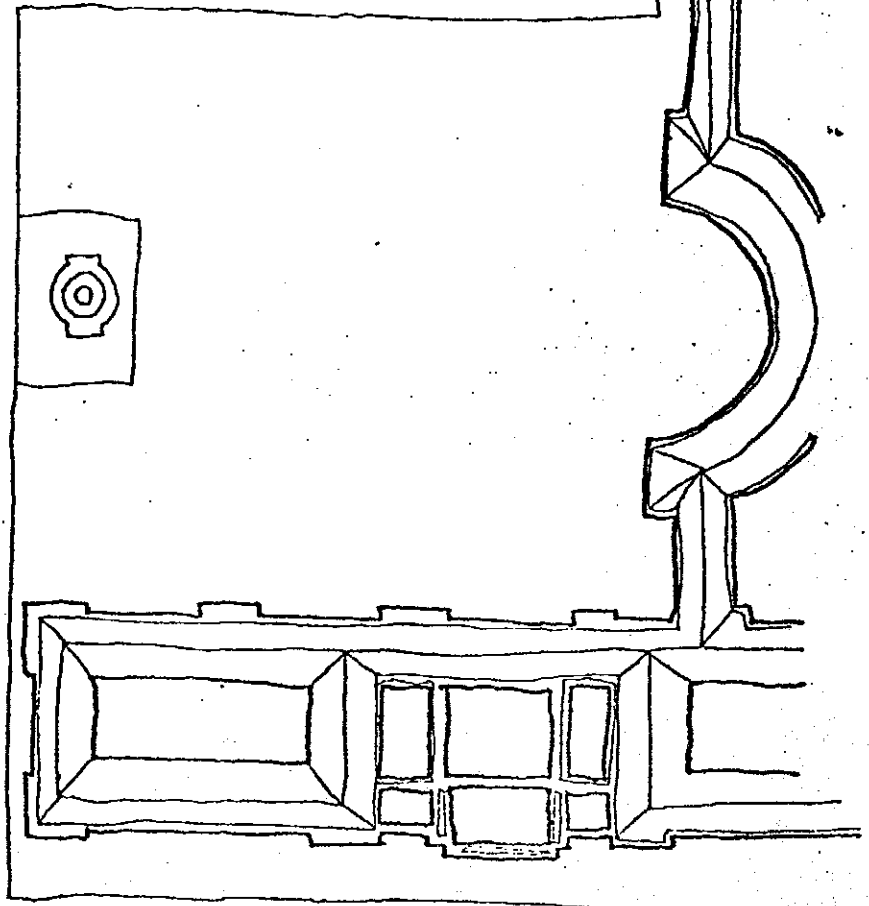
RES. 32



15th ST.



14th ST.



1960

MAP NO.3

DEPARTMENT
 OF
 COMMERCE

E STREET

PERSHING
 PARK

PENNSYLVANIA
 AVENUE

14th STREET

DISTRICT
 BUILDING

WESTERN
 PLAZA

PENNSYLVANIA
 AVENUE

E STREET